

7th/8th Grade Writing Prompt

* If you would prefer not to write about an embarrassing moment, you can write about any significant event in your life.

Task:

In The Great American Slurp, the young daughter of Chinese immigrant parents finds herself terribly embarrassed by things her parents did which demonstrated their ignorance of the American way of life.

In a five paragraph essay, write about a time when you felt embarrassed by something a family member did, or something that happened to you. Think about the following elements as you write:

Procedure:

1. Before writing, organize your thoughts by completing a prewriting activity. You may use a web, a graphic organizer, cluster, list, or map.
2. In the first paragraph, establish the setting and focus the reader on the incident.
3. In the body paragraphs:
 - a) Use narrative techniques to develop the incident. For example: vivid images, descriptive language, sensory details, etc.
 - b) Use dialogue.
4. Your essay needs to contain a personal reflection on the significance of the incident.
5. Your concluding paragraph should provide a feeling of closure
6. Use transitional language appropriate for narrative writing
7. Re-read your paper to see if it makes sense. Revise and edit your paper, combine simple sentences, check for punctuation, paragraphing, margins and content,
8. Essay should be typed using MLA format: double-spaced, with your name, date and class clearly visible in the left hand corner of your paper. Font should be Times New Roman 12.

Name _____ Date _____

Autobiographical Narrative Organizer

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Establish the point of view: 1st person

Hook

Setting/description

When...

Where...

Who was there...

The event or experience (thesis statement)

Body Paragraphs- three or more

Tell the story

Use sequential organization

Use descriptive language and sensory details

Use dialogue to develop plot and characters

Maintain focus on the **single** incident

Paragraph 2: Body

Notes/Ideas/Words

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Paragraph 3: Body

<p>Notes/Ideas/Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

Paragraph 4: Body

<p>Notes/Ideas/Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

Conclusion:

Create a feeling of closure
Reflect about the importance of this incident
Why do you remember this incident?
How has the incident influenced or changed you?

Concluding paragraph

<p>Notes/Ideas/Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

Sample Essay

In this model, writer Laura Baginski shares an entertaining incident involving herself, her mother, and a tomato. Pay special attention to Laura's attitude (tone) throughout the piece. Also notice how she "shows" instead of just "tells" the story.

Note these things:

- **Specific examples of her mother's words of wisdom are provided. Having characters speak brings them to life in your writing.**
- **The main focus of the writing is the monkey bars affair.**
- **The writer goes to extremes in describing her dangerous situation.**
- **The drama increases until the messy end of the incident.**

Tomato on the Brain

"If you keep crossing your eyes like that, young lady, they'll stay like that and you won't ever get married." My mother was at it again. She went on to say, "It's true. There was a little girl in Bolivia who crossed her eyes just like you do and then it was permanent. She died all alone." Words of wisdom from my all-knowing mother. She seemed to have a lethal warning or terrifying story about anything that gave me the slightest bit of pleasure. "If you keep eating candy like that, your teeth will fall out and then you'll look like those disgusting hillbillies you see on TV."

I never listened to her. I would sit there with my eyes crossed, shoveling chocolate into my mouth just to show her. Defying my mother was a kind of mission for me. She knew this, and it terrified her all the more.

One day I was hanging upside down from my knees on my monkey bars. I glanced around the yard. Hanging there, the world was completely rearranged; the trees looked like feather dusters, the basket of vegetables underneath me seemed to replace the clouds, and my dog seemed to be flying. My mother was laboriously caring for her precious yet weed-infested garden. She worked in such jerking, hummingbird-like movements that watching her form an upside-down position was a special and amusing treat.

Wiping sweat off her brow, she peered at me over her shoulder and shook her head. "You know, if you hang upside down like that, all the blood rushing to your brain will make your head blow up."

I smiled. A challenge. This was what I had been waiting for. The sheer excitement of the possibility of my head exploding motivated me to hang there longer.

After five minutes, my temples began to throb. My heart felt like a big lump of pain and seemed to weigh at least 200 pounds. My entire body was numb. I could feel all the blood rushing to my brain like a flash flood. My mother's wise warnings jabbed and replayed over and over in my mind. I was suddenly gripped with the realization that my head was indeed going to blow up.

I tried to get down, but paralysis seized me. In a panic, I closed my eyes and envisioned fragments of my head strewn around the yard. I saw myself transformed into fertilizer for my mother's garden, my severed eyes and nose in my father's tomato patch, dripping off the lilac patch, flowing down the fence

Suddenly, darkness washed over me and I was falling, sinking . . . until my head struck something offering little resistance. The impact jolted me out of my trance.

As my eyes tried to focus, I reached my hand to my head, checking to see how much of it was left. What my hand discovered was soft, mushy, brain-like. Struck with terror, I brought my trembling hand to my focusing eyes. It was oozing, it was red, it was . . . it was . . . a tomato!